# The Reconstructionist

Vol. XIII. October 3, 1947 Tishri 19, 5708 No. 11


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edicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of rael's ancient homeland, and to the furtherance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

# the Reconstructionist

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# EDITORIALS

## THE YEAR OF DECISION

THIS is our first issue since the summer suspension of publication in June. We review the events of the past few months with some trepidation. Europe remains desolate; danger signals flare in America; and, while the prospects for Eretz Yisrael afford hope for the future, we cannot yet be confident that our hope will be realized.

The outstanding event of the summer was the appearance of the UNSCOP report. Its chief importance lies in the recognition of the existence of the *de facto* Jewish state. It is doubtful whether the members of the committee would have been moved solely by considerations of justice or compassion. Eretz Israel is a *fait accompli,* its existence had to be acknowledged.

The hope for the future generated by the report is necessarily neutralized by some of its unfavorable features. Moreover, while the report recommends substantial immigration to Eretz Yisrael, the position of the displaced people in Europe is desperate. The inmates of the camps face their third year behind barbed wire—a mockery of the liberation. No country, other than Eretz Yisrael, has indicated a desire to accept a substantial number of displaced persons. It is no consolation to know that Jews are a minority of the occupants of these camps or that Christian nations discriminate also against their co-religionists. Grudgingly, a few governments have agreed to permit the entry of a select number of homeless people, but only of such as can be absorbed without upsetting the status quo. Self-interest alone should force the nations of the world to erase these blots on civilization. The people now in displaced persons camps, will, unless the abnormality of their life is ended, become sources of infection. It is difficult at best to build the better world. How much more difficult is the task of reconstruction when the human material for building is haunted by the fear of being superfluous and corroded by despair.

The saga of the "Exodus 1947" is a further demonstration of the inhumanity of man. At one time, the calculated cruelty of returning Jews to the land from which they fled, would have been regarded as inconceivable. That this act was performed by that nation in whom the hopes of terrorized men were centered during the early years of the war is even more incomprehensible. And the passive acquiescence of the nations in this perversion of the very concept of law and order reveals to what extent Hitlerism has infected and corrupted the human spirit. The mild protest of the American State Department and the legalistic answer of the British can lead to only one conclusion: the conscience of mankind is frozen.

In freedom-loving, traditionally tolerant Britain, pogroms have taken place. True, the people were incited by the vicious killing of the two British sergeants in Eretz Yisrael. The very fact, however, that the crime of a group of fanatics, outlawed and disavowed by the Yishuv, could be held against the whole Jewish people, is significant. It is evidence that the principles of human brotherhood so glibly mouthed during the common danger of the war, have all been discarded. Men and nations have not foresworn hatred. We are still blind to human interdependence. "One world" is far from realization.

On the credit side, however, we have the bright omens of the maturity of Jewish peoplehood. The World Conference on Jewish Education held in Jerusalem this summer could not have occurred at a more auspicious time from the viewpoint of morale building. The conference was called on the initiative of the Yishuv. It was held in Jerusalem, where life goes on despite sirens, curfews, threats of martial law, and actual military occupation. It was held regardless of difficulties in travel, unsettled political and economic conditions, and physical danger. Other nations have held post-war conferences, on disarmament, on economic rehabilitation, on relief for war-devastated areas, on trade and tariffs. The tradition of education in Jewish civilization is so strong, however, that the Eretz Yisrael Jewry invited its brothers to come to the Homeland from all parts of the world to consider the status of Jewish education and formulate plans for its extension and development. Palestine is indeed the hub of the Jewish civilization. We do not here evaluate the results of the Conference. Its major importance lies in the fact that it took place.

The deep consciousness of Jewish unity pervaded the meeting of the Actions Committee of the World Zionist Organization held in Zurich in August. The committee dealt with political, social and economic matters. It accepted the UNSCOP report as a *basis for negotiation,* condemned the acts of dissident groups, authorized a campaign of public information "regarding the moral and political harm caused by terrorist activities," and declared that "any support lent to the dissident groups and their acts constitutes a breach of Zionist discipline." The Actions Committee set up a program for the economic stabilization and strengthening of the Yishuv and made extensive plans for the absorption of the eagerly awaited immigrants. Episodes like the treatment of the "Exodus 1947" only toughen the Yishuv in its determination to receive its brothers.

We now turn to the American Jewish scene. This year will likely be marked by an emphasis on Jewish education, on the adult, youth and child levels. The conference in Palestine has given added impetus to Americans to intensify their educational efforts, to enlarge their facilities and to redirect their programs.

This summer witnessed, also, the awakening of Jewish consciousness in summer camps. In the past, few of these camps though the management and campers were Jewish, recognized the importance of introducing Jewish content into their activity programs. But this last season, Hebrew language camps have multiplied. The Chicago Branch of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and the Seminary's Teachers Institute established their first Hebrew language camp — Ramah, in Hanover, Wisconsin. An interesting experiment was undertaken at Camp Atid, where teachers in Hebrew language kindergartens were given courses in teaching and in programming for such schools. Zionist camps have become the fashion. The second Brandeis Camp Institute was opened in Southern California. Tel Noar,

in New Hampshire, again offered an opportunity to working young men and women to take a pleasant and inexpensive vacation in "Zionist" surroundings. Plugat Aliyah, the *halutziut* group of the General Zionist movement, opened its new farm near Poughkeepsie, N. Y. Seminars were held periodically throughout the summer and the problems of Jewish life were carefully discussed and analyzed from the Zionist viewpoint. Thus was the message of Zionism brought to America.

The recently organized *Americans for Haganah* will bring to Americans news of Haganah and its program of immigration, colonization and defense. Fragmentary accounts of the quiet heroism of Haganah have filtered through to the American consciousness. But this has not been sufficient. The blatancy of those American organizations claiming to support "resistance" in Palestine has obscured the almost superhuman accomplishments of Haganah. The dissident groups in their efforts to glorify their own cause, have constantly ridiculed or villified the Haganah. *Americans for Haganah* will tell the truth, it will take full advantage of its opportunity to dispel the doubts which may have arisen through ignorance or misconception.

We look forward to the coming year confident that our people will rise to their responsibilities. We must continue to build Jewish life in America and in Eretz Yisrael. We must help Jewry everywhere spiritually and financially. We must meet the challenge of this year of decision.

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## WHERE DOES AMERICA STAND?

THE past few months have brought little change in the post-war direction of the domestic and foreign policies of the United States. During the war, we somehow managed to achieve a magnificent unity, a concentration on a common objective, a determination to forge a just and permanent peace through world organization. The exalted mood of those days has not been recaptured. Our government and a large section of the American people have surrendered to fear, distrust and greed. Get rid of irritating economic and social controls, end sacrifices, return the country to the safe principles of *laissez faire* economy —these seem to be the goals on the domestic front. Build up our superiority in atomic weapons, keep the strength of our armed forces, reduce or stop exports to Europe, and get tough with Russia—such are some of the slogans on which we have been acting in foreign affairs.

The uneasiness, the unsettled conditions and the resurgence of narrow nationalism in America have their inevitable repercussions throughout the world. One of the great dangers that we face is the seeming inability of our leaders to grasp this fact. Dimly they know that the world has changed but that this change effects our individual life they do not seem to understand.

In America on the domestic front, our uneasiness is manifested in increased racial tensions, curbs on organized labor, frenzied investigations by the Unamerican Activities Committee, fear and hatred of aliens, alarm over rising prices, violations of civil liberties. On the foreign front, our fear is indicated by the adoption of the Truman Doctrine, the insistence on keeping the secret of atomic weapons, the grudging administration of relief for Europe, the constant talk of war, presumably with the Soviet Union.

Increased ill feeling among races has resulted in a rise in lynchings, in new restrictions on Negro residential areas, in widespread discrimination against Negroes in employment. The Negro citizens' bitterness has been increased by the failure of Congress to pass a Federal Fair Employ-

ment Practices Act, by its refusal to act on the poll tax, and by the continued policy of the United States Armed Forces to apply Negro quotas. Anti-Semitism, too, has shown an upward curve.

Fear and hatred of the foreigner were apparent in the debates on the Stratton Bill to admit a substantial number of displaced persons to the United States. Supposedly reputable organizations, such as the Daughters of the American Revolution and the American Legion expressed themselves in hysterical statements. Congress yielded to this selfish isolationism. Its failure to act on the Stratton Bill constitutes a gross betrayal of the basic humanitarian tradition of this country.

Labor has been viciously attacked. The Taft-Hartley Bill has wiped out many gains so painfully won over a period of years.

During the war, civil liberties were largely preserved. Now, in peace, many violations can be recorded. For example, the witch hunts of the House Unamerican Activities Committee invade the privacy of individuals and bring us dangerously near to an attempt to control the thinking as well as the actions of American citizens. Liberal commentators have disappeared from the radio. Newspapers exercise caution in editorial policy. War mongering and red-baiting continue. Loyalty tests for federal employees constitute a radical departure from American practice. The decision of the United States Supreme Court approving the use of public funds for religious schools impinges upon the separation of church and state.

The general alarm over high prices and shortages among the consumers has led to an attempt to find a scapegoat for public indignation. Now it is Europe. Exports to Europe cause shortages; scarcity causes high prices; so let us stop both export and relief. So runs the argument by so eminent a figure as Herbert Hoover. The fact that price controls were abandoned too soon, that crop failures have occurred, that consumption has greatly increased, are not generally considered as having a part in the inflationary spiral through which we are now passing.

On the foreign front, our policy is to stop the influence of the Soviet Union. To be sure we declare that our purpose is to protect and extend democracy. There is no doubt about the fact that there are basic differences between the United States and the Soviet Union. There are points where we come into sharp conflict. But instead of attempting to settle these differences or to attain a common meeting ground, we seem to be drifting nearer and nearer to the point beyond which armed conflict will become inevitable.

But the picture is not all black. There are good signs on the domestic front indicating that our people are not entirely blind to the necessity of protecting civil liberties. The decision of the school authorities of Gary, Indiana, to admit Negroes in all the public schools, despite the strike by White students is a marked advance. The refusal by Actors' Equity to play a theatre in Washington, D. C., because it has a Negro segregation policy is a victory for civil liberties, as is the decision of a Superior Court Judge in Massachusetts refusing to consider Kathleen Winsor's book "Forever Amber" obscene and indecent. The passage of a fair employment practices act in Connecticut is another occasion for rejoicing. On the foreign scene, the earnest and honest attempt of Secretary Marshall to give economic assistance to Europe indicates the genuine desire of some of our leaders to live up to our country's long tradition of humanitarianism. It is regrettable that the Soviet Union has refused to be a party to the Marshall Plan and we earnestly hope that Congress will heed the appeal

of our Secretary of State as he presents Europe's needs.

The above sketchy review reveals that we need leadership and direction which is intelligent, humane and understanding. A special Congressional session should be called to deal with ingation and foreign relief. It may be necessary to reinstitute rationing, price controls or agricultural and industrial subsidies. This much is clear: a policy of drifting must be ended. Action must be taken to set us once more on the road which we traveled in the hours of common danger.

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## THE UNSCOP REPORT

THE features of the report of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine are by now familiar to our readers as they have been adequately reported in the general press. The majority report offers a plan of partition which on the whole seems as fair and reasonable as any which we could expect. It offers a viable Jewish state in an adequate area of Palestine; it provides for mass migration of Jewish DP's as soon as the report is adopted and for the abolition of the restrictions on land purchase in the territory allotted to the Jewish state, and it seeks to mitigate the evil economic effects of partition by providing for joint administration, of coinage, customs, communications and control of irrigation by the Arab and Jewish states of Palestine.

In all discussions of the report, it should be borne in mind and must be emphasized that any partition of Palestine is a diminution of the promise originally made to the Jewish people in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate. For the Jews to accept it would be to make a big concession in the interest of peace. If that concession is made the spirit of compromise which it would indicate should be appreciated by the powers that have opposed the realization of the Zionist project as envisaged by the League of Nations and embodied in the Mandate. Their appreciation should manifest itself negatively in refraining from any attempt to impose further limitations on the Jewish state than those proposed in the majority report and positively in giving earnest consideration to any modifications of the report which the World Zionist Organization may propose.

We believe that American Zionists should exert all the influence they can bring to bear on our government to support, in principle, the solution proposed in the majority report and to reject the minority report. The report of the minority is in effect the same as the Grady-Morrison proposal. It would have the Jews accept partition without giving them statehood even in a part of Palestine and would make them permanently dependent on an Arab majority even in the crucial matter of immigration.

As we have already stated in our editorial on the Year of Decision, the prospect presented by the majority report of UNSCOP is a hopeful one. But we shall have to be vigilant and active in the period immediately ahead of us to insure that there be no slip between the cup and the lip.

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# REALITIES AND VALUES

ON A PREVIOUS OCCASION, WE expressed editorially our gratification with the report of the Survey Committee of the J.W.B. We regard it a further occasion for satisfaction that the implementation of the recommendations of the Survey Committee has been entrusted to Louis Kraft. Mr. Kraft has until now been the Executive Director of the J.W.B., but has been given the new position of general secretary of the National Council of the J.W.B. in order to enable him to devote his en-

ergy and skill to achieving the aims formulated by the Survey Committee. His successor as Executive Director is Samuel D. Gershovitz, who can also be depended upon to help guide the Center movement in the direction laid down by the Survey.

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THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON Rabbinic Placement under the auspices of the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Rabbinical Assembly of America and the United Synagogue of America has recently published a code of procedure in placement of rabbis. Though the rabbi is the "spiritual leader" of his congregation, he is at the same time one of its salaried employees. This involves a delicate situation which gives rise to many problems of procedure, particularly in respect to methods by which congregations secure the services of a rabbi and rabbis seek election to pulpits of congregations. Some of the methods that have prevailed in the past have been a disgrace and a sacrilege. The Joint Commission is therefore to be commended for its effort to effect a code of fair and dignified procedures in the placement of rabbis.

It is to be hoped, however, that eventually such a code will not be limited to any one Jewish denomination but be made universal. Otherwise, the rivalry of different Jewish rabbinical and congregational associations will be an impediment to the achievement of the highest ethical standards in rabbinic and congregational relations.

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ON SEPTEMBER 11, ISRAEL Rokach, Mayor of Tel Aviv, and Abraham Krinitzki, Mayor of Ramat Gan were released from the Latrun Detention Camp after having been held there for more than six weeks. Oved Ben Ami, Mayor of Netanya, is still in detention. No explanation was given for their release as no explanation was given for their original arrest, nor was any ground stated for not releasing Mayor Ben Ami. We wonder how the citizens of any town in Great Britain would react, if their mayor were arrested without a charge, held for six weeks without a trial and released without an explanation or compensation either to him or to the city that he served. Such tyranny, wherever it happens is provocation to violence. Yet the same British subjects who would rise in revolt against such tyranny if practiced against them, profess to be shocked by the failure of the Yishuv to cooperate with the British forces of occupation.

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ALL GENUINE GESTURES OF good will on the part of Gentiles toward our people are welcome. But we particularly appreciate the following, reported by Religious News Service. Dr. Carl Hermann Voss, of New York, extension secretary of the Church Peace Union and World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, planted the first trees in the Truman Grove at En Hashofet, a settlement of American *halutzim* in Palestine. The trees were presented by Christian children in American Sunday schools and churches in memory of the million Jewish children killed in Europe during the war. The grove is the first of a series of such groves which the Christian children propose to plant in Palestine.

We appreciate this gesture especially for two reasons: (1) it is an expression of sympathy that takes the form of practical helpfulness and (2) it takes a form of great pedagogic value in implanting sentiments of good will at an early age as an antidote against the prejudices which children are altogether too likely to imbibe from their environment.

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DR. FREDERICK S. PORTER, Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Co-

lumbus, Georgia, is opposed to "giving indiscriminate help to European nations." He wants us to give help only "to those willing to help themselves." We are not informed just how we are to judge whether a nation is or is not willing to help itself. Without a clear criterion for such judgment, it is certainly ethically more justifiable to give "indiscriminate help" than either to withhold help altogether or to discriminate among would-be recipients on the basis of prejudice or self-interest.

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Colonel Joseph Koch, U. S. Chief of Chaplains of the Philippine Ryukkus Command declared Communism to be "a threat to world peace." That is the sort of assertion one hears on all sides these days. But Colonel Koch proposes other means for fighting Communism than one usually hears. "It is futile for us," he says, "to expect to overthrow Communism by ranting and raving, and at the same time to remain blind to social conditions in our own community. Low cost housing, sanitary and healthful living and working conditions, opportunities for fruitful employment, needed schools and recreational facilities would do more to dispel the danger of Communism than all the aggressive exposures of this doctrine by silver-tongued orators." That sounds to us like good sense.

# The Functions of a Jewish Community

By MORRIS ADLER

A COMMUNITY has been defined as an area of common life. It is a useful description though it does not suggest the full scope and possibilities of an organized community. A community is more than an aggregation either of individuals or of agencies. An aggregation of individuals is a physical fact. It is the raw material of a community, but it does not become a community until an inner cohesiveness accompanies the geographic proximity. Geographic compactness may be accidental. The more significant sense of togetherness, however, can only be the outcome of an historical and social process. A group of agencies begin to constitute a community when, underlying their specific function and responsibility, is an attachment to and acceptance of a larger tradition and body.

## Three Kinds of Relationship

A community is the product and focus of several kinds of interaction that continue with vital and dynamic constancy within its confines. First, there must be an experienced, though not necessarily articulate relationship, among the individuals in the group—a sense of interdependence, of common ties and reciprocal obligations. Second, the individuals within the group must feel themselves related to a complex of traditions, values and aspirations represented by and embodied in the community. Third, there must be an outflow of influence from the group-life to the individual. The group confers or confirms the status of its members and buttresses their individual lives and strivings with meaning and corporate sanction. The community gives both content and form through language, ideals, restraints and privileges to large areas in the life of its constituents. This *hut ha-meshullash,* tri-faceted relationship between individual and individual; individual and group, and group and individual becomes concrete in the organized community through many tangible and normal lines of communica-

tion between the group and its members. The community thus helps resolve the eternal tension between individual freedom and social control. Without freedom there is dictatorship. Without control we fall prey to anarchy. The community provides the controls necessary for group life. Since these controls, however, are responsive to the requirements and wishes of the individuals comprising the community, their basic freedom has not been violated.

Till recently the Jewish people has lived in communities that possessed the essential qualities of a corporate, purposive existence. The myth of the Wandering Jew is one that only an outsider having but a scant and sketchy acquaintance with Jewish life could have originated. Wandering spells uprootedness, diffusion and instability. These were never the ultimate, nor in the deepest sense, decisive characteristics of Jewish existence. There was no communal or social disintegration as concomitant to the physical dispersion and exile. The stable mutualities of relationship which are the marks of an established community, existed with undiminished vigor despite the abnormality of the group's political and economic position. The individual Jew felt a strong bond of kinship with the other members of the community. He sensed an identity of origin, destiny and culture with his peers. The community had its physical embodiment in a definitive law, authorized personnel, established norms and mores, institutions and group and religious aspirations to which its members manifested allegiance. The community extended into the lives of its constituents. It conferred status—often the only decent status to which they were admitted. It interpenetrated their daily routine and individual existence. It opened before them, through many centuries, the sole gateway not only to learning but indeed to elementary literacy. The Synagogue, the Yeshiva, the Sabbath, the care of the poor were the palpable reflections of a total tradition. The specific institutions and agencies were spokes in a large historic wheel.

### The Wholeness of the Tradition

This did not mean that into every individual life there invariably flowed the whole of Jewish experience and culture. No person could possibly embrace all of the encyclopedic vastness of his people's life. The sense of wholeness was present, however, even in the devotion to any of the parts. Nor did this signify the absence of diversity of attitude and interpretation. Were we to eliminate from the Talmud its record of controversy and difference of opinion, we would reduce it by three-fourths. The totality of the tradition, however, was not repudiated by the clash of conflicting views any more than the integrity of the Constitution of the United States is affected by a difference of interpretation of any of its sections. In the case of one famous controversy it is reported that a heavenly voice proclaimed: *Eleh v'eleh divre elohim hayim* — both parties speak in authentic accents of the Living God. For *kamah pa-nim la-Torah,* the Torah is a spiritual universe of many aspects. In the eighth century the Karaites were placed outside of the framework of the group. Their offense was not difference of opinion but their rejection of the validity of the whole tradition. There was variety, but it was, as in the case of a symphony, variety in unity.

We come here to the historic function of a Jewish community in American-Jewish life. The internal life of American Jewry is marred by fragmentation and splintering. We have lost our sense of and our hold upon the totality of Jewish life. Jews embrace one or another of the multiple phases of our national experience and culture, and treat it as the whole.

A party or movement in our midst is active in the field of relief or rehabilitation; another in behalf of Palestine; a third is devoted to education, or Hebrew or Yiddish, or civic-protective work or fraternal orders. The corner of the Jewish vineyard which we cultivate becomes for us synonymous with Judaism. We do not pause to develop ideologies which would deny the authority of the larger whole, since American Jews seem to be allergic to ideological formulations. We simply act and live as if there were no Jewish life outside of the limited circle of our own interest. The basic evil in our inner life is not disagreement. It is the absence of balance and discipline. Read the statements of some of the vocal parties in our community and listen to the rhetoric of their leaders. There is a distortion of emphasis and proportion which springs from the pathetic identification of party program with the whole of the Torah; and of the party with K'lal Yisrael. One misses entirely the note of decent humility and self-limitation which would have been evident were a more comprehensive entity recognized. There are many spokes but they do not join to form a wheel; there is a tumultuous periphery but no center. We have organizations but no community. In the sphere of international relations we will have no United Nations acting as a world society until the individual states, without surrendering either their existence or identity, recognize a larger and more inclusive unity than themselves, and a sovereignty higher than their own. The individual institutions in our community must give evidence of their awareness of the larger frame in which they are set.

A Jewish community is more than a physical combination of diverse agencies or strata of individuals. Without suppressing diversity, the community seeks to bring wholeness and proportion into our organized life. There was a time when the Synagogue admirably performed the function of naturalizing the individual Jew in the completeness of Jewish living and learning. The modern age, setting in motion relentless pressures towards secularization, has suceeded in dethroning religion from its former position of primacy in the life of the Jew as well as of the non-Jew. While the Synagogue can and should inspire the quality of wholeness of outlook and largeness of loyalty, it cannot at present function as the embodiment of that wholeness. Circumstances have conspired to transform it into a party-organization, and to make of the rabbi a party-man. A Jewish community has this great function to serve, to make vivid the entire range of Jewish cultural experiences and pursuit. The spectrum of various interests which it will reveal will help make us not less zealous but more Jewish. There need be no dilution of devotion to any one phase. There must, however, be the enlargement of view and vision. A Jewish community which will embrace in an organized pattern the wholeness of our spiritual and social experience does not spell segregation from the main currents of the general life about us. It represents no withdrawal from the community of identity and interests which we share with our fellow-Americans. Such is the mathematics of human emotions that one loyalty does not cancel out any other loyalty with which it is compatible, any more than the birth of a second son diminishes the completeness and intensity of a mother's love for her first-born.

### Responsibility and Kinship Needed to Replace Pity and Fear As Unifying Forces

An organized Jewish community will not be simply a vehicle for attaining greater organizational efficiency, which has been the motivation in the consolidation of agencies into a Federation. It should mark a reaction against the minimaliza-

tion and atomization of Jewish life. The fractionalization of our communal life has resulted in the fractionalization of the individual Jew's response to his group. Too much of organized Jewish endeavor monotonously revolves about one or both of two *leitmotifs,* which often constitute the self-expression of the average Jew. We seek to evoke either pity or fear—pity for our disadvantaged brothers, fear for our own safety and security. A tragic fallacy is involved in thus basing our corporate life on such emotions, which are automatically self-depleting. Every instance of evocation of pity or fear lowers the threshold of emotional responsiveness. Hence the crescendo of effort and frenzied appeal in successive campaigns. Pity is a poor medium for the achievement of communal solidarity, since it is an emotion that flows downward from a superior to an inferior, from benefactor to suppliant. It prevents the establishment of reciprocal obligations between members which constitutes an indispensable element in the life of a community. Fear, on the other hand, creates a climate of emotionalism which does not permit calm reflection and deliberation. The basic attitudes to be fostered are responsibility, a sense of kinship, social obligation and loyalty. Our philanthropy should be the product of, not the substitute for our identification with Jewry. Pity and fear belong to what may be described as the sub-historical stage of communal development. A community reaches the level of historic identity and significance when affiliation is based upon a mutuality of relationship between group and individual in terms of civic obligations and self-fulfillment. The community should inspire wholesome motivations of participation in Jewish life.

### Responsible Leadership Needed

It is sometimes said that a democratically-organized Jewish community would bring into the orbit of active Jewish life, large numbers of Jews presently disenfranchised. While this aim is both valid and relevant, it is necessary to understand some of its deeper implications. The leadership of a community of voluntarily associated individuals has authority and influence to the extent that the leadership is related to the membership. A leader ideally is one who articulates the inarticulated aspirations and values of his group. His is an authentic voice when it speaks in the accents of the deepest currents in the lives of his followers. The glory of Jewish history has been the environment created by the multitudes of anonymous simple people through the centuries from which there sprang the great men in our history. There was a continuous flow of reciprocal influence between leader and people. The problem of Jewish leadership in America is not simply a problem of the quality of one individual leader or another. Our group life is not distinct and vital enough to be the seed-bed of great leadership. We find too often what Kurt Lewin has called the "leader from the periphery," who comes to a position of prominence in our midst not from the center, but from the furthermost boundaries of Jewish interest and affiliation. Often one seeks a position within Jewry to compensate for the status which he believes he deserves but cannot attain in the larger community. There is a paternalistic approach which inspires the view of one's constituency as one's wards and waifs. There is a dissociation and gulf between the two which was expressed in the words attributed to a so-called leading Jew: "I am perfectly willing to speak for the Jews, as long as I do not have to speak to them."

Leadership is often conferred for distinction achieved outside of Jewish life, as a minority group feels honored in the

honor that has come to one of its own. Vital communal living cannot be achieved through such a leadership. The Jewish community must become a force for the building of a constituency, self-conscious, interested and given a voice in the planning of its life. Out of the midst of such a constituency true leadership will emerge. The Jewish community would remind us of "the forgotten man" in Jewish life, namely the normal and self-supporting Jew. We take care of the orphaned, the aged, the helpless. We do not do sufficient planning for the enrichment of the life of the every-day Jew who is not a "case" in any of our welfare agencies. We offer him no outlets for activity and policy-making. We do not gear our organized effort to stimulate and inspire him.

### Jewish Community Councils the Basic Unit of Community Organization

The road before us is not an easy one. American Jewry, in common with all Jewish centers, is a victim of the global tragedy. The needs of our brethren monopolize our attention and give a one-sided direction to our communal enterprises. The raising of large quotas compels the setting up of a hierarchy based on influence and wealth. The pattern of leadership to be found in our periodic fund-raising campaigns becomes *ipso facto* the pattern of leadership in the community generally. The philanthropic factor becomes not only the dominant but frequently the exclusive factor.

Quietly and without any orgy of dramatic explosiveness earnest Jews must continue their prosaic but historic task of laying slowly, day by day, the foundations of vital, comprehensive, genuine American Jewish communities, through representative, local Jewish Community Councils.

# Simhat Torah – A Triumph of the Democratic Spirit

By ROBERT GORDIS

IN an editorial in THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST (October 20, 1946), devoted to the Consecration Service now being conducted on Simhat Torah in some Reform and Conservative congregations, the writer rightly stresses the importance of "retaining the dynamic quality of the ceremonial life" of Judaism, and points out that "through the centuries there was a continual development and evolution of Jewish practice."

Now, the Simhat Torah festival as a whole is highly significant from several points of view. Its history reveals the vast capacity for growth inherent in traditional Judaism, even after the Biblical and Talmudic periods, its two most creative epochs. Moreover, the development of the day discloses the powerful democratic impulse characteristic of the Jewish heritage. Finally, it sheds light upon the technique of development and change in Jewish life and law.

### Early Meaning of Simhat Torah

Simhat Torah, which is the ninth day of the Sukkot season in the Diaspora and the eighth day in Palestine, has the distinction of being the youngest Jewish festival. As late as the Talmudic period, it was merely the second day of Shemini Atzeret, added because of an original uncertainty in the calendar, like the second day of Pesah, Shabuot or Sukkot, (*yom tov sheni shel galuyot*). It is still

called *Shemini Atzeret* in the Prayerbook. Since the rabbis were at a loss to assign a reason for Shemini Atzeret, and were compelled to fall back upon touching but remote legends to explain its existence,[1] it is obvious that at the outset this additional day possessed little intrinsic meaning.

The seed of its development lay in the minor fact that, according to the Talmud (*Megillah* 31a), the Torah reading for the day was *Zot Haberakhah,* the closing section of the Torah (*Deut.,* chap. 33-4). When the triennial cycle of the reading of the Torah gave way to the annual cycle, this fact stimulated a rich creative development. The second day of Shemini Atzeret became Simhat Torah, the day marking the completion of the Torah. In the fourteenth century, the custom grew up of adding the reading of the opening section of the Torah (*Gen.* 1-2:3). The psychological motivation for this additional reading is expressed in characteristic medieval terms: "So that Satan might have no basis for accusing Israel by saying, 'They have finished the Torah and do not wish to read it any more'." [2] Thus emerged the fundamental character of Simhat Torah as a festival of Torah, marking both the end and the beginning of the cycle, and testifying to the indissoluble bonds between Israel and its heritage.

So powerful was the hold of Simhat Torah upon the people, that the Haftarah ordained by the Talmud (*Meg.* 31a) for the day (1 *Kings* 8:22 ff), was set aside and replaced by the opening chapter of Joshua, the logical continuation of Deuteronomy. Authorities like the Tosafists and Rabbi ben Moses of Vienna (13th century) were at a loss to find a legal basis for the change,[3] but the new character of the day proved more powerful than legal precedents, *minhag mebhattel halakhah.* Thus the *Shulhan Arukh* codified the new practice making no reference to the older Talmudic decision.[4]

### Development of New Observances

Having created virtually a new festival, the people surrounded it with a large number of customs and observances, many of which have since disappeared. It is significant that in countless instances these innovations represented not merely an addition to the existing Halakah, or even its modification, but a direct contradiction, or so it seemed to many scholars who raised varied and weighty legal objections to them. Yet in practically every instance, the people's will prevailed and the practices remained.

Rab Hai Gaon (11th century) was asked about the custom of bringing incense to the synagogue and burning it before the scrolls and he decided on the basis of the law (*Betzah* 22b) that it was forbidden. He was, however, able to permit the decorating of scrolls with women's veils, rings and other ornaments, a practice which also raised some legal difficulties.[5] By the end of the 15th century, it was usual for children to tear down and burn the Sukkah on Simhat Torah, and, about the same time, dancing in the synagogue became widespread, a clear violation of the Talmudic prohibition: "These acts are forbidden because of *shebhut* . . . dancing" (*Betzah* 36b). A widely diffused custom was the practice of carrying wax tapers in the Simhat Torah procession. This was strongly op-

[1] B. Sukkah, 55b; Yalkut Shimeoni, Pinhas, Chapt. 29.

[2] Abudraham *Hamanhig* Tefilot Sukkot, sec. 55; Jacob ben Asher, *Tur Orah Hayyim,* sec. 669.

[3] *Or Zarua,* part 2, no. 393, Tosafot, Megillah 31a, s. v. *lemahar.*

[4] *Orah Hayyim,* sec. 669.

[5] Cited by Rabbi S. J. Zevin in *Hamo'adim Bahalakah* (Jerusalem 1945) p. 128.

posed by some authorities and equally staunchly defended by others. Characteristically enough, it created a serious controversy among the leaders of the Smyrna community.[6] In the 18th century, the custom of firing salutes with gunpowder was introduced.

Why did the rabbis yield on all these issues, and actually seek to find a legal basis for their leniency? Rabbi Joseph Colon (15th century) in his Responsa (*Root* 9) lays down a fundamental principle: "A custom designed to honor the Torah sets aside even the prohibition of *shebhut*, such as dancing on a festival." This principle, it seems to the writer, may be utilized today in the evolution of Jewish law. It offers a fruitful distinction between two types of innovation. On the one hand, there are new, non-halakic practices among the people which are designed to advance the vitality of Judaism, and should therefore be welcomed and validated by our legal authorities. On the other hand, we have acts of violation and neglect symptomatic of the decline of Jewish observance, which must be opposed and overcome, if Judaism is to endure as a vital force.

## Democratic Development of the Festival

The development of the festival revealed not merely the flexibility inherent in Jewish tradition, but also its democratic character. The people had created Simhat Torah, they had given it its character and they were determined to possess it as their own. The jovial *hakafot,* in which the poor as well as the rich, the unlearned no less than the scholars, shared the honor and joy of carrying the Torah scrolls in procession, are a case in point. Neither the Geonim nor the early Decisors as late as Rabbi Jacob Ben Asher in the "Tur" (14th century) or Rabbi Joseph Karo in the "Bet Joseph," (16th century) make any reference to this custom. The evening *hakafot* are first mentioned by Rabbi Isaac Tyrnav in his "Minhagim" (14th and 15th century), and by Rabbi Moses Isserles. A late authority was asked about the custom in vogue in Bucharest where the practice was to take out all the scrolls for the *hakafot.* A newly elected rabbi felt "that they were not paying proper deference to the Torah, because the scrolls were being carried by the populace (*hamon ha'am*) and the children," and so he wished to limit the practice to seven scrolls. The reply was, since the custom to take all the scrolls was mentioned in the decisions of Isserles, it was not to be set aside.[7] In a contest between dignity and enthusiasm, dignity came off second best—at least on Simhat Torah.

The most striking illustration of the strength of the democratic impulse is afforded by the reading of the Torah on Simhat Torah. According to the law, all the festivals have a fixed number of *keru'im,* men called to the Torah. With regard to Simhat Torah, rabbinic authorities differed as to whether the proper number was five, six or ten.[8] All these discussions became superfluous, as the custom arose of calling all men in the synagogue to the Torah. To make this possible, the Torah section was read again and again, and to expedite matters, the practice arose of calling two men simultaneously to the Torah. Both these devices were not free from Halakic difficulties, but the principle that "all Israel share in the Torah" overrode all hesitations and became the accepted practice.[9]

[6] See the reference in Zevin, op, cit., pp. 129 f.

[7] Zevin, op. cit., p. 129.

[8] For the references, see Zevin, op. cit., p. 131.

[9] "Minhagim" of Meir of Rothenberg: *Maharil; Isserles,* gloss on *Shulchan Arukh.*

This did not mark the outermost limit of the democratic spirit. The participation of all Jews in the celebration was carried further and led to the development of a unique custom, called *Vekhol Hanearim*. When *Deut.* 33:37 ff. (*me'onah 'elohei kedem*) is about to be read, an adult is called to the Torah "together with all the youths." All the children come to the pulpit and, standing under a large *tallit* spread over their heads like a canopy, they repeat the blessings over the Torah with the adult. Following the benedictions, the verse *Gen.* 48:16 is recited by the congregation: "The angel who hath redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named in them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

The true spirit of Simhat Torah is admirably reflected in the story that the Hasidic Rabbi Naphtali Ropshitzer was wont to tell on himself. He once noticed how an ignorant huckster was celebrating Simhat Torah with unrestrained boisterousness. "Why all this enthusiasm?" the rabbi asked. "Have you studied so much Torah this past year that you indulge yourself so completely in the rejoicing?" "Rabbi," the huckster replied, "suppose my brother has a celebration, have I no share in the festivities?"

### Simhat Torah in Modern Times

In modern times, even the jollity and folk character of Simhat Torah have suffered under the impact of the decline of Jewish religious life. What little has remained of Jewish observance has become increasingly formalized, with the rabbi and cantor officiating before a largely inert congregation. Nonetheless, experience shows that where there is enthusiasm for Jewish observance, skill in interpreting it and zeal in practicing it, it is still possible to restore the vitality of the Jewish religion.

The Consecration Service now in vogue in some Reform and Conservative congregations is a praiseworthy attempt to add a new though related significance to this beloved festival.

It would, however, be a mistake to be satisfied with such innovations alone and ignore the inner spirit of Simhat Torah as reflected in its historical development. The participation of every Jew in the ritual of the day is a dramatic representation of the truth that Torah is both the duty and privilege of every Jew, youth and adult. That principle must be retained, stressed and extended today.

The time has come for applying this basic teaching to the last group in the Jewish people still disfranchised — and recognizing publicly the position of women in Jewish religious life. Precisely because of its folk-character, Simhat Torah lends itself admirably to the formal recognition of the role of Jewish womanhood. Even in the traditional synagogue, where the segregation of the sexes was rigorously enforced, the bars were relaxed on Simhat Torah and women were admitted to the main floor of the synagogue for the *hakafot*.

It should by no means be overlooked that according to the *Shulhan Arukh*, "everyone may be counted among the seven called to the Torah, even a woman, except that the Sages have said that a woman is not to be called because of the honor of the community" (*Orah Hayyim* 282, 3). Isserles (*ad loc.*) goes farther and declares that women may be *included* among the seven, but they may not constitute all the seven. These two statements indicate at least the theoretic willingness of both Sephardic and Ashkenazic authorities to permit women to be called to the Torah. Obviously the reservation

about the "honor of the community" being impugned by the practice has no validity at a time when the equality of women is recognized everywhere. Our concern here is not with the practice of Torah reading, but rather to indicate that there is sufficient justification in traditional Jewish law for the innovation now to be described.

### An Innovation: "Vekhol Hanashim"

In accordance with the democratizing trend of Simhat Torah, which is characteristic of its history and is evident in the extension of the honors at the Torah to the entire male population, and even to the children, one Conservative congregation inaugurated a new ceremonial three years ago. This custom arose when, one Simhat Torah morning, a group of women active in the Sisterhood who were present in the synagogue, approached the rabbi and asked, half quizzically and half in earnest, "What about us? Don't we have a share in the Torah at all?" They were expressing the widespread resentment among thinking Jewish women today at their inferior status in public religious worship, so completely at variance with their position everywhere else.

Recalling the ceremony of *Vekhol hanearim,* the rabbi inaugurated a parallel ritual which he named *"vekhol hanashim."* Immediately before the former ceremony, a member of the Congregation is called to the pulpit "with all the women folk." Under a large *tallit,* the women of the Congregation assemble and repeat the blessings of the Tórah, in unison with him. Following the benediction, the rabbi and Congregation recite a blessing based on both *Ruth* 4:11 and the traditional Friday Evening Blessing — *Yesimekhen elohim kerahel ukheleah asher banu sheteihen et bet yisrael,* "May the Lord set you as Rachel and Leah who both built the house of Israel." By this ritual every Jew, male and female, child and adult, has been afforded the opportunity of publicly affirming his bond with the Torah on Simhat Torah day.

The first time the ritual was enacted, only a few hardy souls among the women ventured to accept the invitation to ascend the pulpit. But each succeeding year the practice has won a larger following and today it is eagerly anticipated as a symbol of the growing recognition of the role of women in contemporary Jewish life.

The custom may appear to be somewhat less than revolutionary. But that is precisely its chief virtue—it can be introduced into traditional congregations in which alone the spirit of Simhat Torah still lives, because it follows the pattern of growth and development characteristic of historical Judaism. The fundamental principle is clear. Everywhere the enrichment and reinterpretation of Jewish rites and practices will prove most rewarding and enduring when the process follows the lines of development already marked out in Jewish tradition.

# Psalm IX
# A Song of Victory in the Third Year

By IRA EISENSTEIN

ODEH ADONAI B'KOL LIBI

*"I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart."*

Thank God, it's over. What a relief! With all our hearts we're grateful. No more shooting. No more bombing, or tortures, or burnings, or sinkings, no more blackouts and sirens, and draft cards and goodbyes at the station.

Why don't we do something?—shout, dance, break windows, turn over taxis, burn boxes, kiss girls on the street, march around and look into our neighbor's eyes and smile?

Let's tear up rolls of paper and shout ourselves hoarse!

ASAP'RAH KOL NIFL'OTEKA

*"I will tell of all Thy marvelous works. I will be glad and exult in Thee. I will sing to Thy name, O most high. When mine enemies are turned back, they stumble and perish at Thy presence."*

God's work was in this, come to think of it. Yes, we had the ammunition, the resources and the manpower. Sure. But there were mysterious moments we can't explain. Days that counted for a lot, that swung the odds over to our side. Without them our strength would have been as naught.

We had the breaks. There—a nice clear explanation for something unexplained. Like miracles. Another way of saying we don't know; but there they were: Hitler didn't take England. If Japan had waited longer our help in Europe would have come too late: . . . German scientists never quite finished their work on the A-bomb. . . . Must have been thousands more like these. Every day, every hour. We had the breaks! Thank God!

KI ASITA MISHPATI V'DINI

*"For Thou hast maintained my right and my cause. Thou sattest upon the throne as the righteous judge."*

We Jews were the first to be attacked. The war started with us, back in thirty-three. They singled us out for the slaughter. We cried out. No one listened. The same cry rang out six million times. No answer. But we kept saying "Dayan ha-emet," the Righteous Judge. Maybe it was just habit. Maybe we didn't think what we were saying.

But then it happened, finally. The world began to see that our enemies were their enemies, the world's enemies, that our faith was anathema to the enemies. Then we knew why we had been repeating "Dayan ha-emet." We were being vindicated. Israel was vindicated in her struggle. We knew that soon mercy and justice would follow. Righteous judge!

GA-ARTA GOYIM IBAD'TA RASHA
*"Thou hast rebuked the nations, Thou has destroyed the wicked."*

Well, that's the end of them. No more Nazis; no more Fascists, no more haters and killers. "The Lord is enthroned forever. . . . He hath established His throne for judgment."

It wasn't just for us, you realize. It was for everybody, for all the weak and helpless folks, just people who want to live quietly in their homes, with their families and friends, just plain people who want to work in peace and have a little fun.

Well, there it is. It's happened. Hitler's done. Mussolini's done. The Mikado's done. Like all the time—every time it happened the same way. They couldn't last. No sir, the "throne" is established.

VIHI ADONAI MISGAV LADAK
MISGAV L'ITOT BATSARAH
*"The Lord will be a high tower for the oppressed,*
*a high tower in times of trouble.*
*They that know Thy name will put their trust*
*in Thee. For Thou Lord hast not forgotten*
*them that seek Thee. . . . He hath not forgotten*
*the cry of the humble. . . . For the needy shall not*
*always be forgotten, nor the expectations of*
*the poor perish forever. . . .*

Never again, *never* again are we going to get weak in the knees, and start to blabber about nonsense. Remember the wave of the future? the decadence of the Democracies? Remember all the wise guys who started saying, "What we need is a dictator"? All the smart alecks, who forgot, or never knew, who went around talking about our softness, and how you can't let people run their own affairs?

The cynics, yes, who kept saying that God was on the side of the crafty and the clever and the cunning, who laughed at decency and integrity, who thought we were throwing away our chances by sticking to truth. "It's lies they want, and the bigger they are the better they like 'em!" Wise guys. Never again. You can't win that way. It just won't add up.

KUMAH ADONAI AL
YAOZ ENOSH

*"Arise, O Lord,, let not man prevail.*
*Let the nations be judged in Thy sight."*

OK. Let's go, let's start fixing up this world. And the first thing we've got to learn is that we haven't won this war for ourselves. This wasn't a private business, run specially for our sake. There's no real winner, you know, no victor, no gainer.

When man fights, then the glory and the honor and loot goes to MAN. That's what we fought for, isn't it? And if there's any punishing to do, let's do it—but let's not forget ourselves. We let it happen. We stood by, don't forget. Now there's got to be a law, a law we'll all have to obey, for everybody, no exceptions.

No more of this business of being a law to ourselves. There's something bigger than we are, something we've all got to knuckle under to. We're all in this together. It's get together—or die. And after all this, are we going to die?

SHITAH ADONAI MORAH LAHEM
YED'U GOYIM ENOSH HEMAH

*"Set terror over them, O Lord.*
*Let the nations know they are*
*but men."*

O God, no. Don't let it happen. *You* do something; show us something that will save us, that will scare us out of our wits, something that will crack up our pride and our arrogance. . . .

Terrorize us, freeze our marrow, frighten us stiff, do something so we'll know we're only little men, playing with powers bigger than we realize.

It's starting again, the same old stuff, playing with borders and governments and tariffs and guns, fooling around this time with jet and atoms and germs.

Open our eyes, O God, and our hearts too. Don't let us forget. Don't let us forget!

SELAH.

# Random Thoughts

UNIVERSAL literacy is inherently no more of a blessing than if everyone carried around with him a walkie-talkie. It is the use to which literacy is put that determines whether it is a good or an evil.

* * *

Every human being is both an individual and a member of a people, church or nation. "Individual" and "social" form a see-saw in which neither operates without the other. As we raise or lower the *divine* potential of the individual in each of us, we correspondingly lower or raise the *diabolic* potential of the social. As we raise or lower in each of us the divine potential of the social, we correspondingly lower or raise in each of us the diabolic potential of the individual.

* * *

Children are as little desirous of using their parent's mental furniture as they are of using their parent's dining-room furniture.

* * *

The morning newspaper these days reads like a continuation of a nightmare phantasmagoria.

* * *

Any irrational philosophy or religion seems to be a comfortable resting place for "tired radicals."

* * *

The fact that the road to Utopia is always broken up and in need of repairs would not be so bad, if at least there were some detour by which one might finally get there.

* * *

When one has received a major burn, the physician is told to be sure to treat not only the burn but the patient as a whole.

The physician needs this warning, because in his concern for the burned area he is liable to overlook the general treatment of the patient.

The Jewish people has suffered a major burn during the last war.

In our eagerness to heal that part of it which is now a raw and gaping wound, let us not overlook the general body of our people everywhere, and guard it against all possible inner complications.

* * *

It is evident that a man deserves no special credit either for his natural endowments or for his opportunities.

"But," you will say, "does he not deserve at least some credit for taking advantage of his opportunities?"

Is not, however, the capacity to take such advantage itself part of his natural endowment?

* * *

Alexander the Great was a dissolute young man who could commit murder without batting an eye.

Yet he was the first to try to put into effect the idea of one world, an idea which even his teacher Aristotle, the greatest thinker that has ever lived, could scarcely grasp.

As Alexander envisaged that idea, it was not even to be imposed by force. It was to be eagerly accepted by all mankind.

Which only goes to prove that the Prophets were right when they maintained that God often chooses the most unpromising material for the fulfillment of his purposes.

To discover the unknown we have to be able to discover the obvious and to question the axiomatic.

* * *

Some of our American lawmakers seem to interpret the Atlantic Charter which guaranteed freedom from fear and freedom from want as guaranteeing freedom of fear and want.

* * *

Those who put their faith in technology and expect it to emancipate human life should be reminded that, if not for Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin in 1794, slavery would have died of itself in the South before may years were over and the United States might have been spared the Civil War and the apparently insoluble Negro problem.

* * *

Superstitious faith which is an organized form of fear is more likely to be effective than rational faith which is an organized form of love, by as much as fear is more potent than love.

Many eminent scientists who had aerodynamics at their finger tips kept on saying it was impossible to build an airplane heavier than air.

Along came a repair shop mechanic who knew very little, if anything, of aerodynamics, and built an airplane.

Many eminent sociologists and anthropologists who are experts in human relations keep on saying that it is impossible for Jewish life to maintain itself in the diaspora.

Perhaps the Reconstructionists are the repair shop mechanics who can so build that life that it will be able to maintain itself even in the diaspora.

* * *

There is something illiberal in designating as liberal those studies which have merely academic value.

There is something snobbish in passing up a contemporary thing that is beautiful for an antique that is ugly.

M. M. K.

# Book Notes

## THE PIETY OF ABRAHAM ISAAC KUK

*THE BANNER OF JERUSALEM, by Jacob B. Agus, Bloch Publishing Co., New York,* 1946. 243 *pp.*, $3.

PEOPLE who are not familiar with traditional Judaism as it was lived in centers that never felt the full impact of modernism or sucessfully resisted it often make the mistake of regarding Jewish religious orthodoxy as all of one piece. They assume that its many restrictions completely inhibit the development of original and creative personalities. Dr. Jacob B. Agus has rendered a service to American Jewish readers by helping to dissipate this misconception. He gives us a portrait of one great orthodox personality whose freshness and originality in approaching some of the problems of modern life are undeniable — the late Abraham Isaac Kuk, Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem. The first four chapters of the book contain the story of his life and activities, the remaining three are an analysis of his religious philosophy.

Rabbi Kuk was a poet and a mystic. Scrupulous observance of the minutiae of

ewish religious practice was with him ot a soulless routine nor a mere con-ntional expression of reverence for tra-tional usage. The religious regimen was radiated for him with symbolic signi-cance and served as a true means of com-union with God. Through it he ex-erienced the assurance of a divine scheme nature and history and in his own ersonal life, a scheme that gave life eauty, dignity and holiness. His con-iousness of the immanence of God was strong that it gave him a certain confi-nce in the promptings of his own heart, nd his heart, being by nature tender and arm, saw good in people and institu-ons whose ideologies were subversive of e logical foundation of much of his vn thinking.

Many people are broadminded in the nse of being intellectually receptive to ew ideas and ready to revise their own inions, but fewer are what may be called roadhearted." By broadheartedness is eant the capacity to appreciate and re-ond with affection to persons with hom one is in fundamental disagree-ent and whose activities in many ways em to thwart one's own desires and eals. Rabbi Kuk was such a broad-arted man. Intellectually he was so nditioned by his early environment and aining that he could never quite enter to the modern universe of discourse r grasp all the philosophical implica-ons of the experiences of modern man. t the very emotional intensity of his ety made him seek and see good in the nscientious effort of all who devoted emselves to improving the lot of hu-anity or deepening men's understand-g of nature.

Believing implicitly in the divine destiny Israel and its eternal connection with etz Yisrael, he recognized in the mod-n Zionist movement the evidence of od's grace and of His providential guid-ance of His chosen people. Where other traditionalists recoiled from cooperating with political Zionists who flouted the religious traditions of Israel and thereby desecrated the Holy Land, Kuk saw in their idealistic devotion to their people and its homeland the stirring of a divine spirit. He was confident that that spirit would redeem them and bring them back eventually into the fold of traditional Jewish religion. He particularly loved the *halutzim*, feeling that their social idealism was an important corrective to the formalized, dessicated ritualism and the legalistic casuistry that characterized wide circles of Orthodox Jewry. The following passages from Dr. Agus's book illustrates the attitude of Rabbi Kuk to the *halutzim*:

"In the opinion of Kuk, the work of upbuilding the Holy Land has a marvelous therapeutic effect on the Jewish national soul. An American Jew, who hailed from Denver, Colorado, once visited the Chief Rabbi in Jerusalem and complained to him of the irreligious activities of the *halutzim* in the new colonies. The Chief Rabbi affected to ignore the complaints and, in an apparent effort to change the topic of conversation, inquired what kind of a city Denver was. The American began to tell with exuberant civic pride of the marvelous climate of that great city and its world-famous hospitals. With seeming naivete, the Chief Rabbi remarked, 'I heard that Denver was filled with tuberculous people. Does it not mean that it is an unhealthy city?' 'On the contrary,' replied the Denver Jew, 'because of Denver's wonderful climate, tuberculous hospitals have been established in it and sick people from the whole nation come to live there.' 'Even so,' replied the Chief Rabbi, 'sick Jewish souls from all parts of the world come to sink their roots in the Holy Land, there to be renewed and reinvigorated.' "

Kuk's perception of the religious significance of modern Zionism, his faith in the divine inspiration that animated the movement, expressed itself not only in *agadah,* in such homilies as the one we have just cited, but also in *halakhah,* in sanctioning such interpretations of the Law as facilitated the practical enterprise of Jewish resettlement. This frequently brought him into conflict with other pietists who were inclined to take a stricter view of the Law. He sanctioned, for example, a legal device that virtually suspended the operation of the Biblical law of the Sabbatical year, in order to save the agricultural settlements from ruin. It is significant, however, that, when the agents of Rothschild, who financed some of these settlements, tried to force colonists to avail themselves of the legal device suggested by Kuk, he himself defended their right to refrain from agricultural work during the Sabbatical year in accordance with their own conscience.

As Kuk's mystical attitude toward Jewish nationhood enabled him to find a place in Judaism for the secular nationalism of the Zionist movement, so his mystical conception of God's relation to nature and the universe enabled him to find a place for modern science and for the very theory of evolution which most traditionalists felt—not without reason—tended to undermine the foundations of Jewish traditional doctrine. That the theory of evolution contradicted the literal meaning of the early stories of Genesis troubled him not at all. Although he had no doubts concerning the traditional doctrine of *Torah min hashamaim,* that the Torah was God's revelation of His will to Israel, he, like the mystical author of the Zohar, considered the literal sense of the Torah as merely a symbol of a deeper meaning. Evolution was to him merely the evidence that God's creative power was not exhausted in bringing nature into being but that God "perform[s] anew every day the work of creation..." He therefore praised the activity of the conscientious scientist as helping to reveal the wonders of God's world even though the scientist might not perceive the divine character of the natural law he endeavored to demonstrate. He regarded even those scientists who dispense completely with the idea of God in their thinking as people who, like the atheists among the *halutzim* served God even while they denied Him.

From a rationalistic point of view, the Orthodox critics of Rabbi Kuk were probably more correct than he. Notwithstanding the therapeutic effect of living in Eretz Yisrael and working for Israel's redemption, Kuk's expectation that the *halutzim* would one day become Orthodox Jews is not likely to be fulfilled. And Kuk's reconciliation of the scientific outlook with the Jewish Orthodox tradition which was adequate to satisfy his own need for intellectual integrity, is hardly likely to satisfy either the scientifically-minded modernist or the dogmatically consistent religious traditionalist who does not share Kuk's mystical approach. All of which goes to show that the heart is sometimes wiser than the mind, and the mystic than the rationalist. For the love which flows from a mystical piety like Kuk's can effect that spiritual integration which transcends the differences that usually divide men. It can unite all conscientious Jews and enable them to work together, to the glory of God, the salvation of Israel and the redemption of mankind.

Having said all this in appreciation of Rabbi Kuk, a word of appreciation is in order for the author who has delineated Kuk's personality with such clarity and has interpreted his doctrines with such sympathetic understanding.

EUGENE KOHN